LOBO SYSTEMS

358 South Fairview Avenue, Goleta, CA 93117 (805) 683-1576
Telex: 658482 LOBO-GLTA

7 August 1984

MAXLETTER 9

Suprise! A second Maxletter in the same year.

No, no special occasion. Just lots of small updates.

STATUS

How is Lobo, overall? We keep hearing that question again and again. Apparently the trials and tribulations of other computer companies still has lots of you folks shellshocked. You're worried that we won't be here the next time you need something from us.

The companies that get into trouble are always companies that overextend. They overextend themselves (promises of fantastic new products), their money (lousy accounting procedures), or the market (taking "the big gamble" on expensive advertising). Well, to be honest, we've tried a little bit of all three. But we've always backed off before we could get ourselves into too much trouble. Maybe its luck (of course, we like to think its our wise business acumen), but we're still here and many others are gone.

So how is Lobo, really? Truthfully, we are in just about the same financial shape that we've always been in. We're certainly not overflowing with money, but we're not starving either. And, let us assure you, we're not about to announce any fantastic new products, start new creative financing procedures, or gamble on lots of expensive ads. Nope. We're here today and doing ok. (How's that for the cliche of the day?)

LOBO EAST

Bill Vermillion, our LDOS consultant on the East Coast, reports that he has not been overly busy on the phones. You really don't have any questions about LDOS or MAXIMUL?

We have sold a lot of copies of LDOS for the MAX. Are you using them as coffee table status symbols?

And all those Maximul diskettes? Trying to impress your friends with your dusty library?

If you really don't need to learn anything more, why not show off to the other club members? Submit something to be put on new Maximul diskettes. The more you send in, the more other people will send in -- and the more you'll get back. So go out and improve something.

(No, this is not a paid political advertisement. We gain no income from Maximul and donate no money to it. We do, however, deeply appreciate what they do for all Max owners -- and we all benefit from that.)

AN APOLOGY

Apparently, a couple of weeks before we sent out Maxletter 8, the phone number of one of the MAX-80 bulletin boards was changed. (It takes us 3 weeks to get everyone to agree on a Maxletter, so we didn't see the notifications of change before the letter went out.)

Apparently lots of people made calls to the wrong party, frustrating both the callers and the callees. Sorry about that.

For your information, the MAX-BS bulletin system should be listed as

Three Palms MAX-80 Bulletin System
Seal Beach, California
(213) 430-0079

PERFECT SOFTWARE

We're now shipping Perfect Software from stock -- in either 40 track 5-1/4 or 8 inch sizes. If you haven't seen some of our literature before, the prices are Perfect Writer and Speller $250, Perfect Filer $110, and Perfect Calc $180, or the package (all three together) for $500. Over 90 percent of the time spent on computers is spent in writing, filing and calculating (various kinds of spreadsheets), so this is a valuable package for businesses. And its already installed on the MAX. Plug it in and you're up and running.

MAX-80 MODEM PACKAGE

Speaking of plugging in, we're also shipping the MAX-80 modem package from stock. The package includes the Unicomm control software and a full, top level 212A modem (autodial, autoanswer, 300 or 1200 baud, etc.). Again, we tried very hard to make this a complete "turnkey" (turn the key and off you go) package. Plug the modem in, put the Unicomm diskette in Drive B:, turn the system on, and they'll run, right from the box. (The complete package is $350 plus S&H.)

BOOKS

For a year and a half now, we have been plaguing the book publishers (all of them -- or, at least, every one we could lay our hands on) for introductory books on CP/M Plus, LDOS and hardware interfacing that can be applied to the MAX-80. Well, we are still searching for the introduction to LDOS, but CP/M Plus is now quite well introduced, thank you, and a book on RS-232 (serial port) interfacing has found us. All three are Brand New books, so new that you might not yet be able to find them in even the most up-to-date of book stores.

CP/M Plus Handbook by Alan Miller is an introduction both to computers and CP/M Plus. If you are new to computers in general, the best way to learn is to follow through a real "hands on" book that is specifically written about the operating system that you will be using. This is the book. It starts from the beginning and explains the whys and wherefors of all the main CP/M Plus commands.

Inside CP/M Plus: A Guide for Users by David Cortesi is an introduction to CP/M Plus that is aimed primarily at people who want to know the more advanced features of the operating system (who really want to program the system). If you already feel comfortable running computers, but want to seriously explore CP/M Plus, then this book is for you. It still starts with an introduction, but it goes much further into technical detail than does Miller's book.

Both books are excellent introductions (as you would expect from two of the most prolific authors in the computer industry). If you are interested in either, then make your choice according to your own background -- though they differ so much in approach that you might want to purchase both.

By the way, why in the world do we emphasize operating systems here? We primarily sell hardware, don't we?

Yep, Lobo Systems, Inc. sells hardware, primarily. (In fact, we have always lost money on operating systems. But that's a sore point, so let's not talk about it.)

However, for all the hardware we sell, we know very well that you are going to spend most of your thoughts on software. And what kind of software runs the MAX? Right, operating systems.

So, if you find a good introduction to LDOS, please send a note as soon as you can.

But what about serial ports? Well, the best introduction we have seen on the good old RS-232 is The RS-232 Solution by Joe Campbell, who, not coincidentally, is the author of Unicomm, our modem communications software. (Guess how practically the first copy found its way to our door?) If you have seen his software, then you're probably impressed with how clear a software writer Joe is. That's how clear he a book writer he is, too -- even with such a knotty subject as the much maligned RS-232 "standard".

Ironically, Unicomm and the Lobo modem are plug in and run devices, so you hardly need help with them. But if you plan to interface a serial printer, a different modem, another computer, or any of a variety of controller boards to your MAX's serial ports, this book will be very valuable.

So why all of these words on books? Well, partly advertisement and partly public service. If you wish to pick up any or all of these books, you probably can find them at a relatively local bookstore. But, for those of you can't, we

are selling copies of them at their regular retail prices, but both postpaid and taxpaid. So your savings are minor (taxes and the cost of getting to the bookstore). We are just offering these books as a service to our customers.

And the bottom line?

The CP/M Plus Handbook	for $15.95
Inside CP/M Plus	for $25.95
RS-232 Solution	for $16.95

Please note: we won't be sending these books on the slow boat (certainly not forth class), but they won't come next day air, either. Any special handling (air, overseas, C.O.D. charges, etc.) will be extra. We hope to give you a bargain, but we're not crazy.

MONITOR STANDS

The monitor stands are back on our product list. We have finally found a reliable distributor (one with thousands of stands in the warehouse), so we have stocked up and have them ready to ship. These stands have full tilt and swivel and will hold almost any standard monitor with no sliding (throughout their range of travel). One of their nicest advantages (as we pointed out before) is that they give you space in which to run all those cables and cords that attach to the Max. That itself makes the stand worthwhile. Price: still $29.95, plus shipping and applicable taxes.

HARD DRIVES

We're now shipping both the 5 and 10 megabyte Winchesters (WIN 5 and WIN 10). Usually the shipments are from stock. Only minor parts supply glitches (which always occur when you start up with a new product line) have been slowing us down. Call or write the Lobo Sales Department. (California phone and address are above; toll free number for the rest of the U.S. is (800) 235-1245.)

LDOS WINCHESTER DRIVERS

In Maxletter 8 we asked you to write in if you were interested in software to interface LDOS to WIN 5 and WIN 1Ø. The response was not overwhelming. But it was sufficient for us to take a gamble and contract with a high level LDOS software supplier to create the necessary "drivers". (Which was hardly one of those "big gambles" we mentioned at the beginning of this letter.)

The supplier did so well that he cranked out the code, debugged and all, in less than a month! We guess that, if you're MISOSYS, you know LDOS that well.

So, congratulate MISOSYS. The software is now done and it'll soon be shipping out of our doors. The price is $ 45, and we are selling it only to purchasers of the new Lobo Winchesters. (It won't run on anything but the MAX-8Ø and the Lobo Winchesters, anyway.)

Footnote: please direct your technical support questions to us. MISOSYS is not the official seller of this software, so it shouldn't be shouldered with the responsibility of answering the questions. We gladly accept the responsibility.

CP/M PLUS, AGAIN

Yes, we are <u>still</u> shipping back orders of CP/M Plus. We're trying to be as fair as we can in the distribution. Basically, it's "first ordered, first sent", and our shipments have now covered the CP/M Pluses ordered through the middle of last Fall.

What's taking so long? Money. (How's that for beating around the bush?)

Each CP/M 3 we send out honestly costs us $75 in diskettes, documentation, labor, shipping supplies, invoices, etc. Multiply that with thousands of copies and you have a whole lot of thousands of dollars. We're shipping them as fast as our income allows.

Well, back to the shipping.

Lobo Systems